

REMARKS

Claim 3 is amended herein. Support for the amendment is found, for example, in Figure 3 and the description thereof at page 9, lines 11-16 of the specification. No new matter is presented.

Accordingly, upon entry of the Amendment, claims 1 and 3-12 will be all of the claims pending in the application.

I. Response to Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claim 3 is rejected as allegedly being indefinite. The Examiner asserts that it is not clear: (1) whether the claim requires an (i-2) layer or not; (2) whether the alloy layer of tin and iron must meet the requirements of (i-2) or whether it is an additional layer; and (3) whether the claim intends to specify an order of disposition of the layers on the steel plate surface or not.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1.

Claim 3 is amended herein to recite that the tin plated layer (i-2) is provided on the at least one surface of the steel plate, and an alloy layer which contains tin and iron is provided between the tin-plated layer (i-2) and the steel plate as supported by Fig. 3 in the specification.

The resin-coated steel plate of claim 3 has the tin-plated layer 5 that is reflow-treated permitting part of the tin-plated layer 5 on the side of the steel plate 1 to form an alloy with the steel plate 1. Referring to the resin-coated steel plate shown in Fig. 3, it can be seen that a tin-iron alloy layer 5b is interposed between the tin layer 5a and the steel plate 1. Thus, claim 3 is

amended to clarify that the (i-2) layer is required and that the alloy layer of tin and iron is provided between the tin-plated layer (i-2) and the steel plate.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd paragraph.

II. Response to Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 9 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Nakakoji et al (JP '281).

Claims 1, 3, 8-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by Shimizu et al (JP '809).

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Shimizu et al (JP '809).

The Examiner's position is that the priority documents do not support an unbounded upper limit for the amount of tin in the (i-2) layer.

As previously indicated, claim 1 has been amended herein to recite an upper limit of the amount of tin in the (i-2) layer of 12 g/m² so as to find full written description support in Applicants' priority document (see claim 1 of JP 2002-64127). By perfecting their claim to priority to JP 2002-64114 and JP 2002-64127 filed March 8, 2002, Applicants have antedated the April 16, 2002 effective date of Shimizu et al. The amended claims find full support in the priority documents, verified translations of which were previously submitted together with the Amendment filed November 15, 2005.

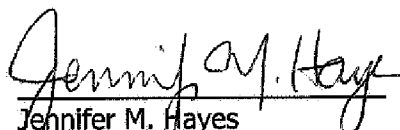
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the §102 and §103 prior art rejections.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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